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PRESS RELEASE

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SAN DIEGO MINIMUM WAGE INCREASED TO \$18.35 IN 2027 AS OFFICE OF LABOR STANDARDS AND ENFORCEMENT JOINS CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE TO PROTECT WORKERS

SAN DIEGO — The City of San Diego announced today that the minimum wage will increase from \$17.75 to \$18.35 per hour on Jan. 1, 2027. The new rate applies to all employees, adult and minor, who perform at least two hours of work in one work week within San Diego city limits.

The increase comes as the City's Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) begins its work as part of the San Diego City Attorney's Office. OLSE enforces the City's labor and wage standards, including minimum wage, earned sick leave, living wage, prevailing wage, and the Citywide Project Labor Agreement, investigates wage theft complaints, and recovers wages and benefits workers earned but did not receive.

"Wage theft is one of the largest forms of theft in the country, and it hits hardest the workers who can least afford to lose a paycheck," said San Diego City Attorney Heather Ferbert. "A worker who is shorted a week's pay should not have to navigate City government to get it back. Bringing OLSE into the City Attorney's Office puts investigators and prosecutors side by side, so a complaint can move from intake to enforcement expeditiously. San Diegans who are owed money have a clearer path to recover it."

The minimum wage change is in accordance with the City's Earned Sick Leave and Minimum Wage Ordinance, approved by voters in 2016. San Diego's minimum wage remains higher than California's, which will increase to \$17.40 per hour on Jan. 1, 2027. The City's minimum wage has increased annually since 2019, with each increase tied to the prior year's rise in the cost of living as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

The ordinance applies to all industries and businesses, with no exceptions. Tips and gratuities do not count toward payment of the minimum wage.

Employees will also continue to earn sick leave, either through accrual or the "front load" method. Earned sick leave can be used for all reasons described in the ordinance, including an employee's own medical care or the medical care of a family member. Employers may limit an employee's use of earned sick leave to 40 hours in a benefit year.

Employers may not retaliate against employees for asserting their rights under the ordinance. Violations can result in penalties of up to \$1,000 per violation, along with back wages, liquidated damages, reinstatement, and other relief.

Updated notices for posting at the workplace are available on the City's Minimum Wage Program **webpage**. Every employer must post these **notices** in a conspicuous place at any workplace or job site.

Workers who believe they have been underpaid or denied earned sick leave can file a complaint at sandiego.gov/olse. Filing is free, and it is illegal for an employer to retaliate against a worker for filing. For questions, contact the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement Minimum Wage Program at SDMinWage@sandiego.gov or 619-235-5912, or visit sandiego.gov/MinimumWage.

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